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 syringe 50 to force the pledget through the tapered section 38 to the delivery chamber. For a somewhat smaller pledget 40, which does not entirely block the lumen of the introducer 12 after hydrating, the venture effect will help to draw the pledget into the delivery chamber 36. As shown in FIG. 5, a finger may be placed over the distal end of the introducer 12 during delivery of the pledget 40 to the delivery chamber 36 to prevent the pledget from being ejected from the introducer by the pressure of the fluid. Preferably, one or more vent holes 46 are provided in the side walls of the introducer adjacent the distal tip to allow air and liquid to escape from the introducer while the pledget 40 is positioned for delivery. These vent holes 46 are small enough to prevent the pledget 40 from passing substantially into the vent holes.--

In The Claims

Please amend Claims 15, 16, 18, 23, 26-31, 36-41, and 65 as follows:

15. (Twice Amended) A method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel, the method comprising:
- establishing a depth of a blood vessel puncture of a patient;
 - loading an introducer with a sponge pledget by hydrating and compressing the pledget;
 - loading the introducer over a guidewire positioned in the blood vessel by inserting the guidewire through the hydrated and compressed pledget; and
 - ejecting the pledget adjacent the blood vessel puncture to facilitate hemostasis while maintaining the guidewire in place.
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Sub J 1 E 2
16. (Once Amended) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 15, wherein establishing a depth of a blood vessel is performed by introducing a tract dilator into a tissue tract until a distal end of the tract dilator abuts an exterior of the blood vessel wall.

E 3 Sub J 1
18. (Once Amended) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 15, wherein establishing a depth of a blood vessel is performed by introducing the introducer over the guidewire and into a tissue tract until a distal end of the introducer abuts an exterior wall of the blood vessel.

E 4 Sub J 1
23. (Once Amended) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 15, wherein loading the introducer includes injecting fluid into the introducer to hydrate and compress the pledget.

E 5 Sub J 1
26. (Once Amended) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 25, wherein loading the introducer involves hydrating and loading the pledget into the introducer.

27. (Once Amended) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 25, wherein loading the introducer involves compressing and loading the pledget into the introducer.

28. (Once Amended) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 25, wherein loading the introducer over the guidewire involves piercing the pledget with the guidewire.

29. (Once Amended) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 25, further comprising establishing a depth of the puncture in the wall of the blood vessel.

30. (Once Amended) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 29, wherein establishing a depth of a puncture is performed by introducing a tract dilator into a tissue tract until a distal end of the tract dilator abuts an exterior of the blood vessel wall.

31. (Once Amended) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 29, wherein establishing a depth of a puncture is performed by introducing the introducer over the guidewire and into a tissue tract until a distal end of the introducer abuts an exterior wall of the blood vessel.

36. (Once Amended) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 35, wherein loading the introducer involves hydrating and loading the pledget into the introducer.

37. (Once Amended) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 35, wherein loading the introducer involves compressing and loading the pledget into the introducer.

38. (Once Amended) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 35, wherein loading the introducer over the guidewire involves piercing the pledget with the guidewire.

39. (Once Amended) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 35, further comprising establishing a depth of the puncture in the wall of the blood vessel.

40. (Once Amended) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 39, wherein establishing a depth of the puncture is performed by introducing a tract dilator into the subcutaneous tissue until a distal end of the tract dilator abuts an exterior of the blood vessel wall.

41. (Once Amended) The method for advancing a pledget of sponge through the skin and subcutaneous tissue overlying a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 39, wherein establishing a depth of the puncture is performed by introducing the introducer over the guidewire and into the subcutaneous tissue until a distal end of the introducer abuts an exterior wall of the blood vessel.

65. (Once Amended) The method for facilitating hemostasis of a puncture in the wall of a blood vessel according to claim 61, wherein ejecting the pledget is performed by withdrawing the introducer.